



MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Greetings, dear friends and family!

We hope this finds you well and blessed. The Mudds have had a deeply blessed and lively year filled with family, friends, and travel (WA, TX, TN, NY, NJ, MO, MN, MD, FL, CO, CA, AK, and Canada!). However, the year also brought with it the loss of four cherished friends from different chapters in our lives: Maggie Mollie (Missouri), Donna Poling (New York), Ron Bever (Oklahoma), and Don McPherson (Wisconsin); we had bittersweet times bidding them each a temporary farewell.

Early in 2023, Jacob converted his savings (earned at the Oshkosh Jersey Mike's) into a 2011 Hyundai Sonata, purchased with cash. (He's back in the saddle with JM's while home on break, as Lydia is also at Thunderbird Bakery and The Howard event space.) Two months later, the four of us all had a tremendous Spring Break trip to Texas in March, visiting with dear old friends (and nephew David!) in Austin, New Braunfels, and San Antonio.

May started with a reunion with dear friends in ministry at the Pepperdine Bible Lectures, where Larry taught a class on narrative preaching. Later that month, Jacob graduated (with honors) from Oshkosh West High. Cynthia also graduated, completing her Master of Science in Marriage & Family Therapy from Abilene Christian University, joining the Oshkosh Marriage & Family Therapy practice. May ended with a wonderful family reunion of the Mudds in St. Louis, complete with a Cardinals game at Busch Stadium.

Summer was action-packed as well, as Cynthia's therapy practice took shape. In June, we welcomed overlapping June visits by Elideu from Haiti and some of the Maryland Wilsons (Jon, Beth, Hannah, and Daniel) as Hannah took up residence in nearby Madison. Then Larry trundled off to camp (WCYC.org, on whose board he serves) to teach at two camp sessions for three weeks (each with its own narrative). August was one for the record books, as we traveled first to Seattle to visit with Larry's cousins, Paul and Brandy, then boarded the Norwegian Sun for a wonderful cruise to Alaska! We traveled with good friends from Wisconsin (who suggested the trip to celebrate Larry's 60th), and had the time of our lives. Favorite memories include sea kayaking, hiking the Tongass rainforest, the GREAT outdoors, icebergs, glaciers, whales, fabulous food, towns, and karaoke, to name a few!



We were only home a few days before Lydia and Cynthia took one last summer excursion to gallery hop out in Door County; then it was time to get Lydia back to NYIT, where she's in her third year of an interior design degree. (Her charcoal drawings rock!) We all returned to the coast the following week to deliver Jacob to Seton Hall University (just outside NYC near Newark). The night he moved in was even Seton Hall night at Yankee Stadium! Jacob has a double major of creative writing and sound production & design. Lydia and Jacob see each other most weekends, as Jacob has resumed his long-held Sunday tech responsibilities at the Manhattan Church of Christ, and Lydia's dorm is within reasonable walking distance.



Once home from NYC, Cynthia and Larry had a weekend jaunt to Minneapolis with her sister Lisa and Lisa's husband, Terry, also ostensibly to mark Larry's milestone. Turning 60 has its benefits, as Terry is a huge Mets fan and we got to see them against the Twins, also taking in town highlights. In October, Larry enjoyed a boys' getaway with close friends from way back in Mizzou days, staying in Estes Park and hiking in Rocky Mountain National Park.

Cynthia's work with The Haiti Education Alliance renewed in the fall as she spearheaded a Haitian dental clinic initiative. In order to raise funds, she put her event wrangling skills back to work, organizing a cheese, chocolate, and wine-tasting auction event at the Culver Center on the UWO campus. It was an outstanding evening that set the precedent for a similar annual event.

November brought another family reunion as Lydia and Jacob took the Megabus from NYC to DC, and we celebrated Thanksgiving with the Wilsons in Maryland. Oliver even joined in the fun! Then as the year came to a close, Larry joined with the Oshkosh Chamber Singers for the fourth time, Oakhaven Church celebrated Christmas Eve with a Service of Lessons & Carols, and the final podcast of Larry's three-year project, *15 Minutes On The Way*, was broadcast.



Lydia and Jacob both had uneventful flights back to Wisconsin for Christmas, and Lydia brought with her news of a Christmas miracle. We had promised to go halves with her on a new laptop that could handle the increased rigors of her design courses (BTW, check out her charcoal sketch of Oliver!). Unbeknownst to the parents, she had proposed to a professional organization to which she belongs the grant of a laptop. Well, they liked the idea so much, she's been awarded a top-of-the-line machine with all the bells and whistles, with "successful grant writer" added to her resume! All they ask for in return is a photo op with the chapter and a testimonial video.

There's not enough room for more, especially to describe what a treat it is to all be together in these precious days. We sense God's hands in every area of our lives, leaving His "fingerprints" everywhere. His mercy and His grace are so abundant! In the midst of all the action, God has cared for us and warmed our thoughts through family and friends, old and new. We thank God that we get to be a part of your life, and wish you a year filled with His love, joy, peace, and hope. And there's plenty of room here on Partridge Court. Come by for a visit this year! ***Sending love & blessings!***